**OVERCROWDED CLASSROOM AND STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**ABSTRACT**

This project work provides a general information and knowledge of the effect of overcrowding on the academic performance of students, Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo as a case study. Students’ academic performance is a matter of concern in any educational settings, educational psychologist opined that conducive environment is vital to learning, therefore the size of classes and the population therefore the thoroughly be considered. overcrowding is a serious problem in classroom situation, it lead to congestion of classroom and this adversely affects learning and performances. Nevertheless, certain measure has to be taken as a panacea or to curb overcrowding. This study was carried out not only to find out how overcrowding affects students but also how it affects students interaction and the frequency used coping strategies adopted by the teachers. Findings showed that overcrowding diminishes the quality and quantities of teaching and learning with serious implications for attainment of educational goals. Only few people will deny that the quality of teaching and learning is on the decline at all levels of the educational systems. The poor result of the senior secondary school examination (SSCE) in almost all subjects in recent years is one potent indicator. The increase in examination malpractices cannot be divorced from poor sitting arrangement as a result of overcrowding and class structures. The quality and quality of interaction in the class are likely to be adversely affected due to lack of space for moving round the class and the over whelming number of students that the teacher has to deal with within a forty minutes lesson.

 **CHAPTER ONE**

 **INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

With increasing population, the number of school going children is increasing much faster than the number of schools is increasing. The death of good schools and the greed of school authorities are filling up classrooms to the brim. Numbers of people complain about their children going to schools where children’s sit in classes where there is no place to keep chairs and tables.

Education plays a very important role in shaping the life of any citizen in his or her communities which he/she find him/herself. The school or learning to be environment must be conducive for learning to be effective, in other words, conducive environment assist students in their academics and pave way to learn. The classroom is the heart of any educational system. No curriculum planning is complete without implementation and evolution, both of which are mainly carried out in the classroom. Most of the class activities take place while students are seated. The sitting arrangement is therefore too important to suffer the kind of neglect being experienced by many secondary schools in the country. overcrowding makes sitting arrangement in a classroom become so complex in the sense that the number of students will be greater than the seat available.

A place, community or society is said to be over populated, when the resources or facilities available cannot cater for the residence of that place or society. In educational settings or school systems overcrowding can be referred to as a situation whereby the number of student’s pupils available in the school system is greater than the resources available in that school. These include infrastructural facilities i.e. building etc ICT and so on. Performance in education means learning outcome, it is seen as the capacity of a student based on defined criteria. Simply put, students’ performance means the output or achievement after learning. Educational planning in Nigeria has always been thought of in terms of quantitative growth, which is usually above the financial capacity of the government (Adesina, 2000). A recent example is the implementation of the current 6-3-3-4 system of education, which is seriously affected by lack of adequate funding and poor preparation. Even though the federal and state governments have shown serious commitment to educational development through their annual budgetary allocation to education in recent years, the attention given to physical facilities is far from being adequate. overcrowded classrooms present a problem not just to teachers, but also to students. Teachers face problems controlling a dozen students at times because of unruly behaviour and lots of talking.

These same teachers when presented with the homogenous task of controlling in excess of 30 students at once will get into a complete mess. It makes a simple task of taking attendance impossible. Especially teenagers who do not respond well to directions and rules. On the other hand, some students cannot concentrate because of other students. The number of failures increases in an overcrowded class because no students can concentrate on the subject at hand. This is leading to numerous problems in classrooms which are producing students with no interest in studies. Action by the government is necessary to reduce this problem and create an environment for education that pushes students to perform better. In Nigeria today, education is regarded as an instrument for excellence for affecting national development. Hence, a national policy on education has been adopted as the government’s own way of achieving some parts of its national objectives. It is aimed that the secondary education should emphasized on the preparation of useful living within society sand the preparation of students for higher education (NPE, 1981, pp.  16), unfortunately, these aims may not be achieved if the present poor performance of the secondary school students persists. overcrowding in classroom reduces teaching effectiveness, it will put more burden on the teacher, due to the fact that the teacher cannot devote much time on a particular students when the teachers are able to devote more time to each students, they can figure out the best way to solve each students problems in order to make then understand the lesson better, thus teaching is more effective.

Effect of overcrowding on the academic performance is that education is the best legacy a nation can give her citizens, especially the youths. This is because the development of any nation or community depends largely on the quality of education of such a nation or community. It is generally believed that basis for any true development must commence with the development of human resources much than is said that formal education remains the vehicle for socio-economic development and social mobilization in any society. Many problems exist in the higher school of Nigeria, to which many factors are also the root because the problems to not affect the school environment alone but replicate itself into the larger society. The desire to be educated gave birth to population in school explosion and massive enrolment of students into the higher schools. overcrowding on the academic performance of students in school is the situation whereby the facility in school are not enough to cater for the proper teaching and learning.

This invariably means that the number of students admitted is more than the available materials and teacher in the school. Teacher over population in higher school as a study the cause and effect would be highlighted and discussed in relatively few sentences. Also the researcher makes everything possible to proffer solution to deal with the ailment of overcrowding in student in Nigeria institution of learning. The study will use of interview and questionnaire from people to collect necessary data for the completion of this work. This project work is directed to find out effect of overcrowding on the academic performance of secondary school students in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo. In spite of the interest of government and it effort to give quality education it is sad to know that students’ academic performance is not encouragement many reasons have been advanced to have be responsible for this, one of this reason is overcrowding.

According to Olowo-Onyanemi et al (2003) in his book titles an introduction to business economics, defined overcrowding as a situation when the people living in a given country is more than the resources or adequate resources such as land. Nwena (2000) definer’s overcrowding as when the people occupying a given geographical location is more than the available resources. Obi (2005) in his book philosophical foundation of education page 143, he said that urban schools are necessarily large in size there is usually a serious control problem with respect to overcrowding. It is really an established facts that overcrowding distorts effective learning and good management of any school. The rise in the population growth in secondary school has really affected the learning process of the students because of the inadequate facilities which include classroom, overcrowding has generated poor performance in academic work and has turned the school environment to a playing ground instead to learning environment.

**1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In the past years, there has been an increase in the population of students in urban secondary schools. This has been consistent, without the attendant increase in facilities, teachers and infrastructure, etcetera. With the decline in the quality of education and output, it therefore becomes imperative to find out whether the increase in population of students’ directly affect their academic performance and identify the causes of increase in population of students in government secondary schools in Akwa Ibom educational zone and what could be done to remedy the situation.

According to Nolasco and Arthu (2001) who identified five likely problems of overcrowding as;

i. Coping with noise making

ii. Managing the introduction and setting up of activities

iii. Making limited resources go a long way

iv. Detecting individual differences and

v. Monitoring the work of individuals within the class.

**1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The major objectives of this study is to;

1. Examine the effect of overcrowding on the academic performance of students in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo.
2. Identify and examine the psychological effect of overcrowding in the classroom
3. The study also aims at explaining how overcrowding in the classroom also affect teacher in the teaching/learning process.
4. It examines the role of government to curb overcrowding as a panacea to redress the issue.

**1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How does class size influence the teaching and learning activities in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo?
2. Does sitting arrangement affect learning in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns uyo?
3. Does the number of students in a class affect student’s concentration?
4. Does overcrowding in school affect student academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria?
5. Does overcrowding affect the efficiency of teachers in the teaching/learning process?
6. Does the atmosphere of learning affect student’s academic performance?

**1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This project work is of great importance in the sense that, it will reveal the extent at which overcrowding has affected student’s academic performance. Also it reveals other factors affecting student’s performance as a result of overcrowding. Furthermore, this study will help the school authority and teacher to design some measures to curb the effect overcrowding has on the academic performance of students. And to the educationist, education curriculum as school structures will be carefully observed to help students learning. More so, serving as a project that would be discovered that overcrowding affect the academic performance of pupils.

Lastly, it will provide the relevant knowledge and serves as a research tool for those who need such materials.

**1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This research work focuses on the relationship between class size and student achievement, it will also cover the causes and effects of overcrowding using comprehensive secondary schools, four towns in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State as case study. This research work covers all public secondary schools students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State too. However, only one public secondary schools will be used as case study.

The limitations of this study include the following:

**Financial constraint:** Financial constraints stemming from the cost of transportation and materials.

**Time constraint:** This project is meant to be submitted within a short period of time.

**Inadequate cooperation:** Uncooperative attitudes of some of the respondents who feel reluctant in giving out information about their schools and families for reasons best known to them.

**1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**overcrowding**: Can be defined as an increase in the number of people living in one geographical area and a place is said to be overcrowded when the resources available cannot cater for the amount of individual resident in a particular area.

**Academic**: Connected with education especially studying in schools and universities.

**Performance**: An action or achievement, considered in relation to how successful it is. The ability to operate capable of high effectiveness.

**Classroom**: A building or structure constructed for the purpose of organizing students for learning. It is referred to as the heart of any educational system.

**1.8 Organization of the study**

This research work is organized in five chapters, for easy understanding, as follows Chapter one is concern with the introduction, which consist of the (overview, of the study), statement of problem, objectives of the study, research question, significance or the study, research methodology, definition of terms and historical background of the study. Chapter two highlight the theoretical framework on which the study is based, thus the review of related literature. Chapter three deals on the research design and methodology adopted in the study. Chapter four concentrate on the data collection and analysis and presentation of finding. Chapter five gives summary, conclusion and also recommendations made of the study.

 **CHAPTER TWO**

 **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

**2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The poor achievement of students in their academic performance has often been channeled to the ineffectiveness of the teachers, ignoring other factors that possibly influence the overall performance of students. Education which is the most potent tool for economic, social, technological and political development in any given nation of the world evolves through teaching and learning. Simultaneously, teaching and learning process can only be effective and efficient in a conducive environment. The students' population pressure and large class size are teaching problems that need to be taken into cognizance in any educational discourse to ensure effectiveness of teaching and learning process. The academic performance of students which is an outcome of the teaching and learning effectiveness largely depend on the classroom population. Students' academic performance also depends on the effectiveness of instruction given by teachers. It becomes obvious that effective teaching which leads to the attainment of goals can only be achievable in a conducive classroom with manageable size. Agba (2010) reported that the ability of the teacher to recognize the students and accord individual assistance to them depends on population or class size. The condition (conducive or unconducive) of the classroom will affect the teacher's pedagogical delivery and the learner's reasoning or interest in the teaching and learning process. This shows that an over-crowded classroom adversely affects the morale of teachers and students. This is why Ogbanna in Agba (2010) maintained that a poorly organized school cannot be compared with a school that enjoys a congenial academic climate good and adequate infrastructure, with qualified staff. He further observed that, as over-population affects the nation's economy, so it affects the academic standard of students. The increasing rate of students in enrolment and the declining rate of the academic performance of students in public secondary schools (due to Universal Basic Education Programme) has for a long time been an issue of concern to government, parents and the general public. Asiyai (2004) and Agba (2010) identified crowded examination halls, large class size, inadequate furniture and textual materials as impediments to students' achievement or success. This is a clear indication that school population and class size are also determinants of the academic achievement of students in any given school. Academic performance is one of the fundamental aims of a school, and this goal cannot be achieved successfully in the absence of good/conducive classroom environment. When a classroom becomes over-crowded with students with inadequate furniture to accommodate them, teachers may spend much time telling stories not related to the teaching and learning objectives, and controlling students who are misbehaving therein. Many public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State especially those sited in the urban areas are grossly large in size without commensurate adequate infrastructural facilities.

Many researches have shown that there is a significant relationship between school overcrowding, large class size and academic performance of pupils- Asiyat (2004) and Nyiam (2012) reported that overcrowded classrooms lead to over stretching of available school facilities and overcrowded examination halls pave way for students to indulge in examination malpractice. Agba (2010) asserted that students' overcrowding have negative effect on the tone of the school which in turn dampens the morale of both teachers and students.

**2.2 THEORY OF overcrowding**

According to Malthus (1934) who opined that human population tends to grow at a geometrical rate, while our ability to produce subsistence increases at a merely arithmetical rate and so we find ourselves in an ever Deeping spiral of suffering caused by overcrowding. In Malthus view, this process could only be showed by the “preventive cheek” of decreased fertility, or the “positive check” of increase mortality.

This theory was once thought to be quite sufficiently denounced, relegated to the status of a curious foot note in the history of economic thought. George (1894) chapter on poverty and subsistence stand out as the definitive marshalling of the abundant logical ammunition against it. At the end of the 20th century A.D; however, an increasingly influential crew of neo-Malthusians is bringing the theory back, adding that subsistence can only keep ahead of population growth at the cost of unsustainable level of environmental harm. Two factors consistently correlate with high birth rate: poverty and lack of education. Where women have had access to education and media’ birth showed significant declines - even when income levels had not increased. It has long been known that when living standards rise in a community, birth rate tends to decline, this widely – documented phenomenon is called “demographic – shift”.

The world is experiencing a democratic increase in population. This is causing problems not only for poor, undeveloped countries, but also for industrialized full developing nations. overcrowding causes a considerable number of problems. In addition, education to limit the number of children per family is not always successful. In this case, it is usually difficult to provide effective educational institution by private and government services in overcrowded cities. Moreover, there is usually a great deal, more crime which is often due to high rate of unemployment. Government must educate the people to limit the size of the family.

**2.3 THE CONCEPT OF overcrowding**

Defining overcrowding as a situation where the total number of people in an area exceeds the available resources. A country is said to be overcrowded when there are more people in the country relative to the available resources August (2007). The people have to compete for the resources and their standard of living is very low generally, thus will in turn increase the cost of living. overcrowding implies that there is deficiency in resources development in relation to the available people Zelingky (2001). overcrowding does not only tend to deficiency of appropriate technology, but presses hand upon the resources and is generally growing at 2% per annum or more (Brogue 1969, clerk 1965, Peterson 1969, Simmons 1978). overcrowding tends to point to the fact that the existing resources cannot match the immediate population number. overcrowding has the potential to make human life petty miserable in no distance future. The earth currently has a recorded population of just over six billion, which twelve years ago, it was just over five billion. The global population of growth is about seventy six million per year and the total number of humans on earth has doubled in the past 40 years. To point a more visual picture of the situation, under our current rate of reproduction, there should be nearly eleven billion people in the world in the year 2050. According to the world overcrowding awareness organization, this means that global food supply would need to be tripled in order to meet the most basic needs. Furthermore, they would require a 100% increase in the total energy expended in food production Bany (2004). Dr. Bebns Sagoe, Nigeria’s national program officer for the united nation population fund gave an illustration to show the adverse effect of overcrowding. He further explains; “suppose a farmer owns ten acres of land, if he has ten children and divided the land equally among them, each child will have an acre. If each of those children has ten children and divides the land similarly, each of their children will not be as well off as their grandfather who had ten acres of land”. This illustration highlighted the relationship between a growing number of people and a finite earth with limited resources. As the populations grow, many developing countries are struggling to cope with present population level. The problems are lack of resources to satisfy the population. As the number of people increase, there are greater demands on forests, topsoil, cropland and fresh water. Another is lack of infrastructures such as inadequate housing, road, sanitation facilities, health services and even schools. Also, lack of employment is not to be left out (Awake 2003). Paul R. Ehrlich, a professor of population studies at Stanford University in the United States notes the enormity of this problem, saying “while overcrowding in the poor nation tends to keep them poverty – stricken, overcrowding in the rich nation tends to undermine the like – support capacity of the entire planet” Akuemmilo (1999). overcrowding retards general development of the education sector. It should be noted that education stands for all the knowledge and aptitudes which any population of a country should stand to acquire. The prospect of meeting the education requirement for growing population in terms of resources and environment is a long term mirage (Unesco source book, 2003). This assertion of the Unesco source book is a clear indication that in Urban areas that has an increasing population of secondary schools such as in Akwa Ibom educational zone which is in for a long term reform mirage. Educational policies are not tailored according to the need of Nigerians probably because of the ever-growing institution, consequently imply on their standard of education as many absent themselves or do not hear what a teacher says in the classroom when they try to attend classes. When we relate it to these schools that have teaming population of students in them, also in most others too, students are scared. The first schools mentioned above may be said to be overcrowding because they are harboring much students than the physical structure. These situations are mostly found in the urban areas as against the rural (Okonkwo 2004). overcrowding in Nigeria is such that the population density is so blatant that it has caused an impaired quality of life, serious environment degradation, and long-term shortages of essential goods and services. It is an imbalance between the numbers of individuals vis-à-vis the resources needed for survival, and the ratio of population over resources, and a fraction of the number of density of individuals compared to the resources food, employment, business opportunity and infrastructures. We are now in a state of meager or non – existent capability to sustain human life due to corruption, lack of credible leadership and of course uncontrolled child birth. Let us now have a thorough look at the situation in Owerri education zone in respect to Government Secondary Schools. As a result of immigration from the rural areas in Imo State to the urban area (Owerri Municipal), it has led to over population of people in the areas. The students ought to be accommodated in the rural area schools are transferred to the urban area without a cores pending increase in the schools or classrooms to accommodate the students and more teacher to handle them. There is no doubt that this ugly trend must have its negative consequences on the academic achievement of the students in these affected schools in the urban area.

**2.4 THE CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES**

Academic performance or achievement could be determined by several factors, Ojiako (2007) defined academic performance as the total outcomes of one’s educational activities. It is seen as the end product of academic work load. Most people know that academic performance generally refers to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies but there are quite a number of factors that determine the level and quality of students’ academic performances. These factors are:

**Grades:** It is certainly the most well-known indicator of academic performance, grades is the students’ “Score” for their classes and overall tenure. Grades are most often a tallying or average of assignment and test scores and may often be affected by factors such as attendance and instructor opinion of the student as well. Grading systems vary greatly by country and school, common scales include a percentage from 1 – 100 lettering systems from A – F, and grade point Average (GPA) from 0 – 4.0 or above.

**Attendance:** It would be difficult to perform well in class if the student doesn’t attend. In public grade schools, attendance is compulsory and numerous unexcused absences may lead to notifying the students’ parents, banning of makeup work for missed assignments and test or direct effect on grades. In extreme instances, parents have even been taken to court and given jail term for their tenant students or wards.

**2.4.1 Standardized test**

Standardized tests are those that provide a consistent measure of a student’s performance with those that take the same test, often nationwide. Standardized test include the Stanford achievement test (SAT), the Stanford binet intelligence scale, and the California achievement test (CAT). As testing procedure and scoring are consistent regardless of where the test is taken, standardized test can provide a more direct representation of the taker’s knowledge and aptitude than his or her grade in school.

**2.4.2 Extra curriculum activities**

Although by definition voluntary, involvement in extra curriculum activities such as volunteer work, schools and sports, newspapers develop and show-case student initiatives and leadership skills as well as provide insight into the student’s interests and priorities. Extra-curricular activities therefore can make a student more attractive to colleges and employers. **2.4.3 Behaviour**

Yet another measure of academic performance is the assessment of the student’s behavior while in school. Grade schools often have strict guidelines for student behavior, and violations such as academic dishonesty (cheating and plagiarism) and class disruption can lead to disciplinary action. Delran School District in New Jersey for example, cites several different types of detention and suspension for student misconduct in its 2009 guidelines.

**2.5 THE CAUSES OF overcrowding**

overcrowding can be trace to a natural disaster causing migration to a small area leading to an inadequate supply of water, food and other resources. In developing countries that require a large amount of manpower, overcrowding could become an issue as people are told to reproduce as much as possible and that trend just does not stop. overcrowding frequently caused by lack of availability of contraceptives and taboos against abortion. The most common effect of overcrowding is a strained social support system (health care for example) and limited resources such as food, water, and etcetera. War could also be called an effect of overcrowding as everyone has to fight to get what little they stressful environment. overcrowding is not simply a function of the size or density of the population. overcrowding can be determined using the ratio of population to available sustainable resources. If a given environment has a population of ten, but there is food or drinking water enough for only nine, then that environment is overcrowded; if the population is one hundred individuals but there is enough food, shelter and water for two hundred individuals for indefinite future, then it is not. overcrowding can result from an increase in births, a decline in mortality rate due to medical advances, from an increase in immigration, a decrease in emigration, or from an unsustainable use and depletion of resources. It is possible for very sparsely populated areas to be overcrowding, as the area in question may have a very meager or non- existent capability to sustain human life (example the middle of the Sahara desert or Antarctica). The resources to be considered when evaluating whether an ecological niche is overcrowded include clean water, clean air, food, shelter, warmth, and other resources necessary to sustain life. If the quality of human life is addressed as well, there are then additional resources to be considered, such as medical care, employment, money, education, fuel, electricity, proper sewage treatment, waste management, and transportation, negation impacts should also be considered including crowding stress and increased population. If addressing the environment as a whole, the survival and wellbeing of species other than human must also be considered. Some countries have managed to temporarily increase their carrying capacity by using technologies such as agriculture, desalination and nuclear power. However, most technologies decrease the long term carrying capacity unless they are designed to be sustainable. Some cornucopias have argued that poverty and famine are caused by bad government and bad economic policies, and that higher population density leads to more specialization and technological innovation and that this leads to a higher standard of living. In the context of human societies, overcrowding occurs when the population density is so great as to actually cause an impaired quality of life, serious environmental degradation, or long term shortages of essential goods and services. This is the definition used by popular dictionaries such as Merriam Webster. overcrowding is not merely an imbalance between the number of individuals compared to the resources needed for survival, or a ratio of population over resources, or a function of the number or density of individuals compared to the resources that is, food production they need to survive. When focusing on the effects of overcrowding on our daily living. overcrowding has impacted the life of common man in reference to educational institutions most especially the secondary schools in the western Nigerian society and has proved to be one of the gravest difficulties that have to be fought. overcrowding implies scarcity of resources and economic inflation; these are monsters which can make life miserable. We can summarize the effect or causes of overcrowding as related with academic performances of students in Owerri, Imo state as follows:

**Decline in the death rate:** The fall in death rate, that is, decline in mortality is one fundamental cause of overcrowding. According to the advancement in medicine, man has found cure to the previously fatal diseases. The new inventions in medicine have brought in treatments for most the dreadful diseases. This has resulted in an increase in the life of expectancy of individuals Mortality rate has declined leading to an increase in population. Owing to modern medications and improved treatment to various illnesses, the overall death rate has gone down. The brighter side of it is that we have been able to fight many diseases and prevent deaths. On the other hand, the medical boom has brought with it, the curse of overcrowding.

**Migration:** Immigration is a problem is some parts of the world. If the inhabitants of various countries migrate to a particular part of the world and settle over there, the area is bound to suffer from the ill effects of overcrowding. If the rates of emigration from a certain nation do not match the rates of immigration to that country, overcrowding makes its way. The country becomes overly populated. Crowding of immigrants in certain parts of the world, results in an imbalance in the density of population.

**Lack of education:** illiteracy is the opposite in meaning of literacy. It is another important cause of overcrowding. When a country that is developing or under- developed lack proper educational training, there tends to be great ignorance on the factors that should have been adopted in reducing growth in the society. Those lacking education fail to understand the need to prevent excessive growth of population. They are unable to understand the harmful effects that overcrowding has based on their ignorance or illiteracy status. They are unaware of the various simulative manners of controlling population. Lack of family planning is commonly seen in the midst of families with illiterate parents or guardians who live based on their cultural beliefs. As such there exists lack of good family planning as towards reducing overcrowding in the nation. This factor is one of the major leading to overcrowding. Due to ignorance or illiteracy, they do not take the appropriate and necessary family planning measures that reduce overcrowding, thus leading to a high rate or increase in the entire population of the society in this issue, assuming the families discussed here are highly literate and the parents or guardians know how to moderate child birth and family planning appropriately, the result will be fabulous in the sense that it tends to positive response to the appropriate and desired family planning required for the control of the population of a nation so as to make out positive changes and results achieved greatly.

**2.6 INCIDENCE OF overcrowding IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

There are so many issues raised when and each time the public schools come to lime light. We have to highlight some factors such as the over crowed public schools which in turn have generated less learning as discipline in academic moral decline. A lot of teachers who have always present report on the usual PTA meeting have insisted that due to the fact that parents who wants their children or wards to go to school notwithstanding the number of children they have and as a result of this, they dump off the children as the school’s liability and as such, there would not be positive academic performance as a result. It is realized that every large family home schooled and truly devoted their live to their children will reap little or less from the labor. Even the little they reap could still be a burden to their fellow citizens directly. The other counter argument to overcrowding has always been the care and finding of the older generations. It is a civic obligation of the citizen. The incidence of overcrowding in Government secondary schools cannot be overemphasized. The burden of over population in secondary school is mainly borne by the students. In schools that are over populated, the ratio of students to teacher is always high which has a negative impact to the student’s academic performance. It should be noted that overcrowding in secondary schools apprehends a shortage in the benefits to be achieved in the education sector. In this case it is observed that in overcrowded secondary schools, one teacher teach so many students and it is obvious that all the students cannot understand what the teacher is teaching as their attention is been divided. Indiscipline is common in overcrowded secondary schools, this is because the school is overcrowded and the teachers cannot control the students and inculcate in them the spirit of discipline. The situation of overcrowding is solely responsible for social vices, hardship, commotion, poor standard of living and crime among students in the overcrowded schools. In this situation, there are inadequate instructional materials, low standard of education, and production of poor or little quality text book for the students, congested classroom and higher rate of school drop outs. Another reason, our culture does not want to talk about the issue of overcrowding, is two reasons; one, we are of a culture that measures success on short term growth. More people, more cheap labor and more consumers (why have the government always looked the other way at illegal immigration? Until recently when local areas cannot afford them anymore, and people are starting to get stressed by crowded conditions). This in term means constant growth somewhere, housing, and wall mart sales, whatever. We contend that a viable, smart economy does not need a growing population to be successful. Business and educational activities must be successful in a culture of stable non growing population. One of the constant contentions is that overcrowding is outstripping the ability to support it. There has been no pause time. The result of overcrowding in our academic environment is what we see today at all government or public schools in Akwa Ibom. In the issue of these incidents, we are now at the most critical stage of resources, the main two: energy and water. For positive results to be achieved 100% form. We have to make it on the influence of overcrowding as pertaining achieving positively great academic performance in government schools. Everything depends on the above mentioned resources (energy and water). One the constant contentions are that overcrowding is out stripping the ability to support it. There has been no pause time. Our nation needs this very much, a leveling off of population so we can fix our infrastructures (like academic environment that will deliver good results and performances), damaged ecosystems, slow down sprawl, etcetera. The result of what is occurring to us today is a result of the fact that overcrowding is stripping our ability of water to support us invariably. What is the Middle East really in conflict over? Water, Look at our far west, mega cities built upon nothing starting to have water wars. Hell, it is happening to us due to the poor delivery of our government agencies and other social organizations which one way or the other affect the students of these public secondary schools heavily in this society of ours. Considering the area of population, the recent climate changes has affected our society and thus resulted to effect on the comfort of the students towards positive delivery of academic performances. These questions come in mind when you contemplate on these factors. We talk of why we cannot level or balance our population, both as a society and as a nation? So people could have a better quality of life and so children can grow up healthy and better educated. Where is the mandate that we must have a billion people? Ten billion Or 12 billion? There is no sound reason to support this. The only argument for an individual is personal choice. But at what cost, our globe cannot support it. The culture cannot support it, and my prediction is that we will soon reach the breaking point, which is going to lead to chaos and anarchy in the academic entire new class of people, the underclass criminal and war fighting groups composed of deposed men and women that cannot go anywhere else, but because of our unrealistic views of population we are to be blamed. This is where overcrowding according to academic performances becomes a big national security issue. The situation of over-population is to be held for social vices, crime, poor standard of living, hardship and corruption among students in the overcrowded schools. In this situation, there are inadequate instructional materials, poor production of few quality of text books or educational materials, low standard of education and school drop outs as an end product of the so called overcrowded secondary schools.

**2.7 THE PROBLEMS OF overcrowding IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

These problems are enormous and numerous too. (Beshavion 1992) lamented that overcrowding of schools with its many problems ranges from indiscipline to lack of dedication to duty by the teachers, lack of student control, lack of serious studies on the part of students etcetera. All the aforementioned conditions affect the academic performance of students. We can understand that a lot of reasons are behind the overcrowding of secondary schools especially in the urban areas, our focus in this research work. For instance, children of civil servants, businessmen of repute, even indigenes themselves send their children and wards to secondary schools within Akwa Ibom education zone. The problems of overcrowding in government secondary schools are being addressed through the urban and rural areas so as to create brighter atmosphere for students to achieve academic performances positively. The problems of raising children through these government schools have become so scary. How can one balance raising children that are protected appropriately early on but also responsible once they face such challenges? Recent surveys of these problems have listed some top discipline problems in public schools as the following;

**Drug abuse:** The students in the current public secondary schools have been forced to do take hard drugs like ( marijuana ) just to make them feel relieved a bit from the environment while some take it to feel belonged to their environment which is the bandwagon of spoilt and wreck less children.

**Suicide:** In the government secondary schools, it has suddenly turned out to be a headache that even the students tend to try avoiding the situation in class. Due to mental stress, emotional depression and spiritually demoralized as a result of the overcrowded class rooms, a student could decide easily to terminate his/her life suddenly, because there exist no single opportunity to really meet up to the teachers expectations which is considered poor nor the parent or guardians expectations. As such, when the students lacks attention he/she tends to feel demoralized and depressed due to the harsh environment and might resolve in taking his/her life and this ending the mystery.

**Rape:** In government secondary schools the condition of overcrowding should not be ignored. In a situation where there exists female students in male and female boarding schools, the males who could turn out to be corrupt and thus make out a scenario where rape would take place using the instance of the recent rape attach on the students of Adiaha Obong Girls secondary school, Akwa Ibom. In this case, the students whose accommodation is seen as uncomfortable, crowded and highly overcrowded due to the number of students admitted into the high school were molested and raped due to the insecurity of their environment. Even at this point, other government schools are still at risk if time is not taken. **Cultism:** The act of bad groups and corrupt students in secondary school has made the situation worst by resulting into cults and several fraternity in high schools in the society most especially government owned. Wherever there is intimidation of the students by the corrupt ones there is every tendency that the “good ones” among the students will initiate the characters and styles of bad acts displayed by the cult students. If the school management cannot be able to control the overcrowding and outnumbered students in the government secondary schools, we are left with choice of the current spate of corruption in the country to influence them effectively. But in the instance where the students are normal in population, these problems listed would have been avoided and the sanity reinstalled into the academic system.

**Pregnancy/Abortion:** when in government schools, most especially the female secondary schools, the students due to overcrowding indulge in several corrupt practices and thus those ones who have one way or the other indulge in having sex would peradventure get pregnant and in order to make sure the situation is saved, the female student would have no choice than to follow the “usual” way or culture of others by hither to aborting the pregnancy to remain in the school environment. Due to competition among these girls, based on getting pregnant and thus aborting the baby. When there is overcrowding this happens, and the students who are supposed to be educated fail to achieve good academic performance.

**2.8 IMPACT OF overcrowding ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

The quality of the students in turn depends largely on the quality of education diet that students receives in secondary schools and which is also dependant on upon the standard of control that teachers and students enjoy. It has been observed that, the problem of adequate and effective quality control has been responsible for producing students who remain half-baked and could not assist the society in which they find themselves( Erinle & Abioye, 2003). The problem of quality in Nigeria public secondary schools has been a recurring one, more so after the introduction of free Education policy in certain parts of Nigeria in 1979 and Universal Basic Education of 1999. Many criticisms have been associated with the low standard of secondary school education in Nigeria. The greatest among these is the lack of quality of its products. According to the critics, it has been growth without development (Akuemmilo, 1993). The problems of our secondary school include poor academic performance, gross indiscipline among staff and students, weak and incompetent teachers, poor quality teaching, poor performance in public examinations, high waste rate and so on. However, many factors have been identified as being responsible for the poor quality of work in our public secondary schools. They include: poor funding, inadequate supply of qualified and experienced teachers and outdated method of teaching among others (Akuemmilo, 1993).

 **CHAPTER THREE**

 **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

* 1. **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the method used in collecting data required in carrying out this research work it explains the procedures that were followed and the instrument used in collecting data.

* 1. **SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION**

Data were collected from two main sources namely:

1. Primary source and
2. Secondary source

**Primary source:**

These are materials of statistical investigation which were collected by the research for a particular purpose. They can be obtained through a survey, observation questionnaire or as experiment, the researcher has adopted the questionnaire method for this study.

**Secondary source:**

These are data from textbook Journal handset etc. they arise as byproducts of the same other purposes. Example administration, various other unpublished works and write ups were also used.

* 1. **Population of the study**

Population of a study is a group of persons or aggregate items, things the researcher is interested in getting information for the study the effects of overcrowding on the academic performance of students in secondary school. The researchers randomly select 200 staffs and students from comprehensive secondary schools, four towns in Akwa Ibom state as the population of the study.

* 1. **SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Sample is the set people or items which constitute part of a given population sampling. Due to large size of the target population, the researcher used the Taro Yamani formula to arrive at the sample population of the study.

n= N

 1+N(e)2

n= 200

1+200(0.05)2

= 200

1+200(0.0025)

= 200 200

1+0.5 = 1.5 = 133.

**3.6 INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION**

The major research instrument used is the questionnaires. This was appropriately moderated. The principals were administered with the questionnaires to complete, with or without disclosing their identities. The questionnaire was designed to obtain sufficient and relevant information from the respondents. The primary data contained information extracted from the questionnaires in which the respondents were required to give specific answer to a question by ticking in front of an appropriate answer and administered the same on staffs and students of the school: The questionnaires contained about 16 structured questions which was divided into sections A and B.

* 1. **VALIDATION OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The questionnaire used as the research instrument was subjected to face its validation. This research instrument (questionnaire) adopted was adequately checked and validated by the supervisor his contributions and corrections were included into the final draft of the research instrument used.

* 1. **Method of data analysis**

The data collected was not an end in itself but it served as a means to an end. The end being the use of the required data to understand the various situations, it is with a view to making valuable recommendations and contributions. To this end, the data collected has to be analysis for any meaningful interpretation to come out with some results. It is for this reason that the following methods were adopted in the research project for the analysis of the data collected. For a comprehensive analysis of data collected, emphasis was laid on the use of absolute numbers frequencies of responses and percentages. Answers to the research questions were provided through the comparison of the percentage of workers response to each statement in the questionnaire related to any specified question being considered.

Frequency in this study refers to the arrangement of responses in order of magnitude or occurrence while percentage refers to the arrangements of the responses in order of their proportion.

The simple percentage method is believed to be straight forward easy to interpret and understand method. The researcher therefore chooses the simple percentage as the method to use. The formula for percentage is shown as.

% = f/N x 100/1

Where f = frequency of respondents response

N = Total Number of response of the sample

100 = Consistency in the percentage of respondents for each item contained in questions.

 **CHAPTER FOUR**

 **PRESENTATION ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

**4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Efforts will be made at this stage to present, analyze and interpret the data collected during the field survey. This presentation will be based on the responses from the completed questionnaires. The result of this exercise will be summarized in tabular forms for easy references and analysis. It will also show answers to questions relating to the research questions for this research study. The researcher employed simple percentage in the analyzing the data obtained.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in tabular form with simple percentage for easy understanding.

A total of 133 (one hundred and thirty three) questionnaires were distributed and 133 questionnaires were returned.

Question 1

Gender distribution of the respondents.

**TABLE I**

|  |
| --- |
| **Gender distribution of the respondents** |
| Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Male | 77 | 57.9 | 57.9 | 57.9 |
| Female | 56 | 42.1 | 42.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

From the above table it shows that 57.9% of the respondents were male while 42.1% of the respondents were female.

Question 1

How does class size influence the teaching and learning activities in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo?

|  |
| --- |
| **class size influence the teaching and learning activities in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo** |
| Response  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Agreed | 51 | 38.3 | 38.3 | 38.3 |
| Strongly agreed | 31 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 61.7 |
| Disagreed | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 78.9 |
| Strongly disagreed | 28 | 21.1 | 21.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

In the table above, the researcher asked the respondent if class size influence the teaching and learning activities in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo, it can be seen that 51 respondents which represents 38.3% of the respondents agreed to this fact that class size influence the teaching and learning activities in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo, 31 respondents which represents 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed to this fact, 23 respondents which represents 17.3% of the respondents disagreed to this fact, while 28 respondents which represents 21.1% strongly disagreed.

The researcher therefore concludes that class size influence the teaching and learning activities in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo.

Question 3

Does sitting arrangement affect learning in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns uyo?

|  |
| --- |
| **sitting arrangement affect learning in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns uyo** |
| Response  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Agreed | 51 | 38.3 | 38.3 | 38.3 |
| Strongly agreed | 31 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 61.7 |
| Disagreed | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 78.9 |
| Strongly disagreed | 28 | 21.1 | 21.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

In the table above, the researcher asked the respondent if sitting arrangement affect learning in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns uyo, Four Towns Uyo, it can be seen that 51 respondents which represents 38.3% of the respondents agreed to this fact that sitting arrangement affect learning in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns uyo, 31 respondents which represents 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed to this fact, 23 respondents which represents 17.3% of the respondents disagreed to this fact, while 28 respondents which represents 21.1% strongly disagreed.

The researcher therefore concludes that sitting arrangement affect learning in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns uyo.

Question 4

Does overcrowding in school affect student academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria?

|  |
| --- |
| **overcrowding in school affect student academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria** |
| Response  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Agreed | 51 | 38.3 | 38.3 | 38.3 |
| Strongly agreed | 31 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 61.7 |
| Disagreed | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 78.9 |
| Strongly disagreed | 28 | 21.1 | 21.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

In the table above, the researcher asked the respondent if overcrowding in school affect student academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria, it can be seen that 51 respondents which represents 38.3% of the respondents agreed to this fact that overcrowding in school affect student academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria, 31 respondents which represents 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed to this fact, 23 respondents which represents 17.3% of the respondents disagreed to this fact, while 28 respondents which represents 21.1% strongly disagreed.

The researcher therefore concludes that overcrowding in school affect student academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria.

 **CHAPTER FIVE**

 **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 INTRODUCTION**

It is pertinent to ascertain that the main objective of this study was to assess the effects of overcrowding on the academic performance of students in secondary schools, particularly in Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns Uyo.

In the preceding chapter, the relevant data collected for this study were presented, critically analyzed and appropriate interpretation given. In this chapter, certain recommendations made which in the opinion of the researcher will be of benefits in addressing the challenges and causes of overcrowding in secondary schools in Nigeria.

**5.2 SUMMARY**

Based on the data analyzed in the previous chapter, the following were derived;

Students whose schools are overcrowded score very low in the general examination. They also involve themselves in examination malpractice.

The students - teacher ratio in government secondary schools in between 60 - 65 students per teacher, and the population of students in the area is on the increase, with limited teachers, both in number and qualification.

It was also observed from findings that the migration of students in the rural areas to urban areas constitutes an increase in the students - teacher ratio. This proved that teachers in the urban area teach up to 60-65 students per class, this finding is in line with ( Zelinsky, 2001) assertion that overcrowding leads to deficiency in resources development in relation to the available people. It implies that the teachers available cannot be able to control the overcrowded students in order to get the required result. Also, according to (Bogue 1969, Simmons 1974), overcrowding does not only lead to deficiency of appropriate technology, but presses hard upon the resources and is generally growing at 2% per annum or more. The researchers also find out the total number of teachers in urban secondary schools is limited, compared to the increasing population of students in the area.

This study also revealed a lot of factors which contributed to the increase in students’ population in government secondary schools in the region.

It is discovered that students who study in overcrowded schools in the urban areas always score low in the general examination. The findings proved that greater number of the respondents strongly agreed with this assertion. Examination malpractice is also on the increase in overcrowded urban secondary schools, teachers and examiners in these schools cannot co-ordinate the examination properly and control students in the examination hall as a result of the overcrowded students.

**5.3 CONCLUSION**

The major aim of the study was to ascertain if overcrowding does affect academic performance of students in secondary schools. It was discovered that overcrowding is associated with lack of dedication to duty by the teachers, lack of student’s control, and lack of serious studies on the part of the students. Comprehensive secondary school, Four Towns Uyo in Akwa Ibom state was selected and used for this research. Questionnaires were issued to all the secondary schools involved in the research by visiting them one after the other by the researchers. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage formula. The result obtained after analyzing the data revealed that the ratio of students to one teacher in the government secondary schools is more than the normal student - teacher ratio of 30 students per teacher, and the teachers in government secondary schools teach between 60-65s students, population in government secondary schools were analyzed, such as lack of recreational facilities in the rural areas, improper family planning, well-equipped laboratory and availability of infrastructural facilities in the government secondary schools. The study finally concludes that students whose schools are overcrowded perform poorly in the general examination compared to students whose schools have normal population. As a result of this findings, i persuade the government, teachers, parents, and those responsible for education administration to put heads together in giving quality education to the students. Also, we persuaded the government to reduce the size of each class to 30 students per class in order to enhance students’ academic excellence, and there should be a quota for enrollment into government secondary schools. It was suggested that there should be a replication of this research work in order to achieve more findings.

**5.4 RECOMMENDATION**

In view of the researcher findings, the researchers wish to make the following recommendations that are necessary;

1. The ministry of education should give quota on the students’ enrolment in government secondary schools.

2. The class size should be limited to 30 students per class to ensure academic excellence of the students.

3. The government should provide infrastructural facilities in the rural areas to avoid students in the area migrating to urban areas.

4. The entrance examination into urban secondary schools should be high. 5. The government should always organize a family planning program on the newly wedded couples.

6. Trained and qualified teachers should be sent to both the urban and rural secondary schools.

7. More private secondary schools should be established in the urban areas to help accommodate students in the area.

For future research the researcher also recommend for a wider geographical area in order to obtain disparity in academic achievement of students in urban secondary schools. Further investigation should be carried out on family planning and effective overcrowding control system.

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